



## Progressive Procession

For Immediate Release

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### **City of Albuquerque Human Rights Board In Discussions Regarding Banning Memorials Established In Celebration of a Violation of The Customary International Law Of Human Rights**

**Albuquerque, NM –Saturday, August 14, 2020—**

The City of Albuquerque Human Rights Board has reportedly drafted a recommendation for the City Council to consider the adoption of laws banning memorial established in celebration of violations of International Human Rights Law.

When cultural property including the naming of public buildings has been established in celebration of a violation of the customary international law of human rights, the government should be permitted to remove and/or rename that property.

For example, In the State of North Carolina Governor Roy asked the North Carolina Legislature to repeal the Cultural History Artifact Management and Patriotism Act of 2015, which had prevented governments from removing monuments on public property.

Governor Cooper stated "*I don't pretend to know what it's like for a person of color to pass by one of these monuments and consider that those memorialized in stone and metal did not value my freedom or humanity. Unlike an African American father, I'll never have to explain to my daughters why there exists an exalted monument for those who wished to keep her and her ancestors in chains.*"

Recent events here New Mexico such as the June 2020 Onate Protest in Old Town and the murder of George Floyd by Minnesota Law enforcement have prompted calls for action from the City of Albuquerque Human Rights Board. The Board held special meetings in July to hear the concerns of citizens and discuss what actions the Board could take in accordance with the Human Rights Ordinance.

The monuments of Spanish conquistadors serve as recurring flashpoints between residents of Hispanic descent and Native Americans whose ancestors suffered at the conquistadors' hands.

Native Americans have long claimed the statues honor colonizers who ravaged their communities, enslaved their people, and committed other atrocities

In Old Town stands two commemorative cannons used by the Confederate Army, with another plaque listing financial supporters of the effort to create these replica cannons. These cannons are sponsored by descendants of leaders of the Confederate Army and the Knights of the Golden Circle. These groups have placed these symbols of racism, hate, and white supremacy to preserve their ideology. The previous administration removed the original Confederate States of America flag and two plaques honoring Confederate soldiers.

Over the last few decades an emerging movement to remove monuments honoring people who helped lead what Native groups describe as a centuries-long war against their very existence. This movement received an enormous boost when Dan Snyder, NFL Owner, Washington Football Team NFL rescinded his right to utilized words that de-humanized Indigenous Peoples. In San Francisco and San Jose officials have removed a statue of Christopher Columbus from the lobby of City Hall and are debating the removal of a prominent downtown monument depicting a defeated Native American at the feet of a vaquero and a Spanish missionary.

The city of Kalamazoo, Mich. has taken down a park monument of a Native American in a headdress kneeling before a westward-facing pioneer. In Baltimore, a city councilman has vowed to replace a smashed Columbus monument with something that better reflects "current-day values."

In this national debate, some have argued that Confederate symbols are simply marks of history, and those who would bring them down exhibit the worst kind of political correctness and are reading racism and hatred into a simple history lesson. According to historian Jane Dailey from the University of Chicago, in many cases, the purpose of the monuments was not to celebrate the past but rather to promote a "*white supremacist future.*"

Another historian, Karyn Cox, from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, has written that the monuments are "*a legacy of the brutally racist Jim Crow era.*"

A historian from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, James Leloudis, stated that "*The funders and backers of these monuments are very explicit that they are requiring a political education and legitimacy for the Jim Crow era and the right of white men to rule.*"